Kashmir and Jammu Hill States With Focus on Kishtwar Till 1588

Dr Anjuman Ara, Associate Professor, Centre for Study of History and Culture of Jammu & Laddakh Region, Jammu University, Jammu.

Email: dr.ara.anjuman.@gmail.com Mobile: +91 788 947 9871

ABSTRACT

This is a known fact that smaller states were either subjugated by the powerful and bigger states for multiple socio-political reasons. Moreover, weaker states even submitted and acknowledged the sovereignty of mighty states without fighting. The present paper intends to describe the socio-political interphase of Kashmir towards Jammu hill states with special focus on Kishtwar, which has been an ancient state of Jammu hills. It can be traced from pre-christian era. The state of Kishtwar was one of the 22 princely hill states of Jammu region during the medieval period. According to Kalhana's *Rajtarangini, t*he ancient name of Kishtwar was Kashtvata and it was located in the south-east of Kashmir on the upper valley of Chenab river[1]. Pir Hasan Shah, the author of *Tarikh-i-Hasan* mentions that "Kishtwar was situated between the two hill passages and was 120 miles away from east of Kashmir[2]"

CONTENT

The state of Kishtwar was formed sometime around 800-810 AD by Kahanpal[3] a leader of the Hindu Rajput tribe. Kahanpal became the first ruler of Kishtwar ruling dynasty. According to Kalhana's *Rajtarangini* the first sign of socio-political interaction between the two states goes back to 11th century AD, when King Kalasa, the then ruler of Kashmir organised a grand assembly of the contemporary rulers of hill states in 1087, in which Raja Uttama the ruler of Kishtwar also participated[4].

Afterwards, Agradev-raja, the next ruler of Kishtwar was ousted by his cousin Bolad Dev who wanted to become the ruler of Kishtwar. So Agradev-raja had to take shelter in Kashmir and subsequently the ruler of Kashmir gave him a *jagir* (a possession) of prestigious of M*ouza* (village) named Roopavan[5]. P.K. Kaul writes that for the first time Kishtwar was subjugated by King Ananta of Kashmir (1028-1063) around 1036. Jayapala was the last to struggle for the continuance of Kashmir supremacy over Kishtwar during Hindu rulers of Kashmir[6].

Later on Kishtwar became a place of refuge for persons who for some reason or the other had to flee from Kashmir[7] for example Suhadeva fled to Kashmir[8]. In 1339, Shahmir founded Sultanate in Kashmir. These Shahmiri Sultans also established friendly relations with Kishtwar Rajas[9]. In 1540 Mirza Haider Duglat conquered Kashmir and rules for 11 years[10]. Later on, in 1547 Mirza invaded Kishtwar during the rule of Raja Raj Singh of Kishtwar[11], but Kishtwar forces defeated him[12].

After, Ghazi Shah Chak founded Chak dynasty in Kashmir in 1554[13]. Regular references of relations between Kashmir and Kishtwar are found. Ghazi Shah (1554-1560) conquered Kishtwar and made it a tributary state of Kashmir[14].

The last ruler of Chak Dynasty named Yaqub Chak in 1586 was married with the sister of Raja Bahadur Singh of Kishtwar named Shankar Devi[15]. Due to this matrimonial alliance, both the states came closer politically as well as socially. Although the supremacy of Kashmir over Kishtwar was maintained, but the principality of Kishtwar enjoyed an independent status due to this

matrimonial alliance. Thus at the time of Akbar's conquest of Kashmir in 1586 AD, the state of Kishtwar had close socio-political ties with Chak's of Kashmir. When Akbar invaded Kashmir in 1586 AD, Yaqub Shah Chak along with other Kashmiri nobles took refuge in Kishtwar[16]. Raja Bahadur Singh provided Yaqub with all support against the Mughals because Yaqub Chak was brother-in-law of Raja Bahadur Singh. Yaqub Shah stayed at Sarkot (Kishtwar) and from this place he for a number of times attacked Kashmir with the help of forces of Kishtwar and gave tension to

Mughal governor Qasim Khan at Kashmir[17]. Finally Qasim Khan failed to capture Yaqub Shah, therefore Akbar deputed a new *Hakim* (governor) named Yusuf Khan to invade Kashmir and imprison Yusuf Chak[18].

Within two years Yaqub Shah Chak was defeated by Mughals. He was sent to Delhi, then to Bihar where he died in 1593[19]. Later on, Hussain Chak and Aiba Chak took shelter in Marwah (a place in Kishtwar). These nobles continued their struggle for regaining the throne of Kashmir from Mughals. For this purpose, they use Kashmir as a base for the military attack on Kashmir. This led to direct conflict between Mughals and forces of Kishtwar[20]. Even after the establishment of Mughal sovereignty in Kashmir, Kishtwar continued to remain the base to give shelter to Chaks who tried to regain Kashmir throne from Kishtwar. In 1604 AD Hussain Chak and Aiba Chak revolted against Mughals. In order to suppress the revolt, Mughal governor Mohammad Quli with big Mughal forces attacked Kishtwar in which Kishtwar forces got a crushing defeat and Raja Bahadur Singh had to submit before Mughals[21].

On this victory of Mughals, Raja Bahadur Singh of Kishtwar promised to fulfil following terms and conditions:

a) To accept Mughal sovereignty

b) To remain faithful to Akbar and his Dynasty

c) To pay annual tribute to the Mughal emperor

d) To send as many hostages as possible to the Mughal Court.

e) To provide no refuge to the Chaks or any other of Mughals.

As a result of this, Kishtwar now became a tributary state of Mughal Empire in 1604 AD[22]. Thus from the very beginning, Mughals do not have good relations Raja Bahadur Singh of Kishtwar because the state provided shelter to all the rebellious Chaks and also supported them against the Mughals. This is also clear that Yaqub Shah Chak tried to regain the Kashmir throne 4 times with the help of Raja Bahadur Singh of Kishtwar but he could not achieve his objective. Yaqub Shah Chak remained at Kishtwar from 1586 to 1588 along with his wife Shankar Devi and never surrendered to the Mughals. The Kishtwar Records describe that Yaqub Shah Chak died in Kishtwar in 1588 and was buried at Sarkot[23] (Kishtwar). His widow Shankar Devi continued to reside in Kishtwar and in the memory of her husband she constructed a water-course from the Goganbaran Stream (Kishtwar) to a town, and a masonry tank was made, called Darag-Vajaj ,and also another water-course from Kali-Nag to the village of Zewar[24]. It is known that even after the death of Sultan Yaqub Shah the last ruler Chak Dynasty the state of Kishtwar continued providing shelter and assistance to the rest of Chaks against the Mughals who defeated Raja Bahadur Singh of Kishtwar in 1604 AD and made them a tributary under Mughals of Kashmir.

CONCLUSION

From the above mentioned study, it may be concluded that Kashmir was the mightier state as compared to other Jammu-hill states. In Kashmir sources we found frequent references of Kishtwar state since ancient times which shows it was very significant. It is important to note that Kishtwar mostly remained independent till Kashmir was conquered by the Mughals in 1586. The rulers of Kashmir since ancient times to medieval period wanted to capture Kishtwar due to many reasons for example, it had important passages and routes which connects Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh since ancient times. Thus Kishtwar had close socio-political and economic links with Kashmir since historical times. It is an established fact that saffron, cumin seeds, rice, wheat, *rajma* (kidney beans), oil seeds, cotton, tobacco, g*ucchi* (wild mushroom) high value crops grow in Kishtwar. Rich forests provide valuable forest produce. *Changthangi* goats provides fine wool used for *Pashmina* shawls. Many times Kashmir tried to conquer Kishtwar since its formation by ruler Kahanpal in 8th century till end of the sultanate in Kashmir but Kishtwar always declared her independence and mostly remained independent. It is also concluded that people of ruling class are both Kishtwar and Kashmir used to take shelter in each other's domain areas for example, Agradev-raja of Kishtwar in order to regain his throne took shelter in Kashmir where he has been granted a *jagir* by ruler of Kashmir in 9th century and the Kashmiri ruler named Raja Suhadeva (1301-1323 AD) fled to Kishtwar when Ladakhi Buddhist Rinchana attacked Kashmir. It is also found that during sultanate period of Shahmir sultans from 1339-1539 AD Kishtwar remained independent and became a regular place of refuge for the Kashmiri people and nobles in the times of political chaos.

In 1540 AD Mirza Haider Duglat conquered Kashmir and in 1547 AD conquered Kishtwar during reign of Raja Raj Singh of Kishtwar but later, Kishtwar freed herself from Mirza's tributaries. In 1554 AD Chak dynasty was founded in Kashmir by Ghazi Shah Chak who dared and conquered Kishtwar again and made it a tributary to Kashmir. It is important to mention that the last ruler of Chak dynasty named Yaqub Shah Chak got married with Shankar Devi, the sister of Raja Bahadur Singh of Kishtwar. This matrimonial increased both states' strength politically, socially, economically and religiously. This bond prolonged to such an extent that all states of Jammu hills for example Rajouri, Punch, Bhimbar, submitted when Akbar established his soverignty over Kashmir in 1586 AD but Kishtwar never submitted even after the death of Yaqub Shah, Raja Bahadur Singh of Kishtwar gave sheleter to other Kashmiri Chaks nobles to reconquer Kashmir from the Mughals. It was only in 1604, Kishtwar got a crushing defeat and became a tributary to Mughals of Kashmir.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1 Kalhana, *Rajtarangini*, Vol.2, Tr. By M.A.Stein, Delhi,1989, p.431

2 Pir Hasan Shah, *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, Vol.1, Urdu, Srinagar, p.243

3 Ghulam Mustafa Ishrat, *Tarikh-i-Kishtwar*, Srinagar, 1973, p.19

4 Kalhana, *Rajtarangini, op cit*, p.111

5 Ghulam Mustafa Ishrat, *Tariq-i-Kishtwar*, Srinagar, 1973, p.37

6 P.K.Kaul, *Himalayan Principalities in Jammu, Kangra and Bhaderwah*, Jammu, 1993, p.29

7 J.Hutchison & J.Ph.Vogal, *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Delhi, 1999, p.640

8 K.N.Pandit, *Baharistan-i-Shahi*, Calcutta, 1991, p.17

9 Raghunath Rai, *A History of Kashmir,* Jalandhar, 1996, p.68

10 Mirza Haider Duglat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, *Eng.Tr. By E.Denison Ross,* Delhi, 1986, p.21

11 *Ibid,* p.21

12 Narsingh Das Nargis, *Tarikh-i-Jadid-i-Dogra Desh,* Jammu, 1967, p.257

13 K.A.Nizami, *History of India*, Vol.5, Delhi, 1993, p.774

14 Raghunath Rai, *op cit*, p.131

15 Ghulam Mustafa Ishrat, *op cit*, p.46-47

16 Jogesh Kumar Dutt, *Medieval Kashmir,* New Delhi, 1993, p.311-312

17 Ghulam Mustafa Ishrat, *op cit*, p.47

18 *Ibid,* p.47

19 *Ibid,* p.47-48

20 F.M. Hussain, *A Cultural History of Kashmir and Kishtwar,* New Delhi, 1992, p.129

21 Ghulam Mustafa Ishrat, *op cit,* p.48

22 F.M.Hussain, *op cit,* p.29

23 Ghulam Mustafa Ishrat, *op cit*, p47

24 *Ibid,* p.48